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THE PRESENT CONDITION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY.

GERMANY has become the classic land of modern socialism. As Engels triumphantly wrote shortly before his death, the German workingmen's party forms the real, "massive force" of the large international proletarian army, and, as their conceptions of history and the larger, general ideas of modern socialism were first formulated in their organic connection by German thinkers, by Marx and Engels, these thoughts, which at present enter more and more into the workingmen's parties of all countries, have found in Germany by far the most powerful echo, and have here imprinted upon the entire movement their characteristic stamp. Finally, to repeat again the words of the veteran, Frederick Engels, more than in any other country, this German movement has shown "how the right of universal suffrage is used," and has thus by its example furnished "a new weapon, and one of the most incisive," to the movement in foreign countries.

The universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage had been introduced by Bismarck for the North German Confederation in the year 1867, in the hope of deriving from it an increased popularity for the confederation and favorable elections. The humble East-Elbian farm laborer, whom he knew, and who votes in great measure even at present according to the order of the government and of the owner of the estate for which he works, may have served, in the eyes of Bismarck, as a type of the rest of the people—dating back to the time when Bismarck was himself a citizen of Pomerania. In this way the democratic, universal right of suffrage, which forms the most acute contradiction to the spirit of militaristic, bureaucratic, police-governed Prussia, and which had by no means been intended to cut into the monarchical prerogative, but only to adorn it, was given to

the North German Confederation, and a few years later to the German Empire, without any considerable political agitation, simply as the accidental result of political combinations and Bismarckian diplomacy. Of all the failures Bismarck met in his scheming—which, like the *kulturkampf* against the Catholic church, the “exceptional law” against the social democracy, and the so-called social reforms, effected the contrary of what their originator had intended—there is none which has avenged itself more disastrously on its originator, none the results of which he would more gladly cancel, than precisely this introduction of universal suffrage. Small as is the power of the German parliament, as compared with the federal council and the emperor—it has not even any influence on the appointment of the members of the cabinet—and pliable as the parties which make up the majority have shown themselves during all this time to all the wishes of the government, yet it is to be said, that this right of suffrage has at least come to be the most powerful means of agitation and demonstration in the hands of that opposition party which alone the government has reason to fear—the German Social Democracy.

The number of votes cast by this party has increased irresistibly, hand in hand with the industrial development of Germany. The party united on their candidates in the year 1871 124,700 votes; in the year 1874, 352,000; in the year 1877, 493,000; at the next election, in the year 1878, a small decrease in the number (473,100 votes) is to be noted, as the result of the terror caused by the repeated assaults on the person of the emperor. For all sober thinking citizens it was an accepted fact from the outset that the party, by virtue of all their traditions and their consistent attitude, was in no way an accomplice in the assaults on the person of the emperor, and the documentary proof of this has been furnished. But this did not, of course, prevent Bismarck, who wished to annihilate the aspiring party with one crushing blow, from utilizing these assaults for the damage of the party. Parliament was dissolved, and the official apparatus worked with high pressure in order to get in a par-

liament which would lend its countenance to the government's plans of persecution, and at the same time, what Bismarck particularly cared for, to a shifting of ground from the free-trade policy previously in vogue to an agrarian protectionist policy. Considering the high pressure exerted by the government machine in the elections, the decrease of the socialistic votes by only 56,000 could not but cause surprise through its insignificance. The "exceptional law" which the new parliament voted completely outlawed the workingmen's movement. The police were given power to prohibit societies and associations of any kind, particularly trades unions with corporate funds, as well as to suppress printed matter of a socialistic nature, and to dissolve meetings of a socialistic tendency. In addition to this, the collection of money for social-democratic purposes was forbidden. All violations of these prohibitions were threatened with heavy penalties, in fines and imprisonment. But that was not enough. The states of the empire were charged with the discretion of proclaiming "minor state of siege" in all places where there was special danger of socialistic agitation. This gave the authorities discretion to expel politically objectionable persons. This law was administered in the most rigorous manner. The whole organization, both political and industrial, and the entire press of the party, fell a victim to these persecutions. It was the severest test to which the still youthful movement could be subjected. The result of the next parliamentary election showed, indeed, a considerable decline in the party, so that it now cast only 312,000 votes. But even the next succeeding election, that of 1884, showed an entirely different result. The party had adapted itself to the new condition of things, and in that year, with 550,000 votes, it achieved the greatest result of any year up to this time. From this time forward the advance assumes dimensions hitherto unknown. At the elections of 1887 the party polled 763,100 votes, and in the year 1890—the same year in the course of which the government, after the resignation of Bismarck, dropped the "exceptional law" so brilliantly refuted by the results of the election—the

number of votes jumped up to 1,427,000; it had almost doubled since 1887. In 1893 the social democracy came into line with 1,786,700 votes, distancing the formerly largest party, the center, by a few hundred thousand votes. At the last election, that of June 16, 1898—the interval between elections having meanwhile been extended to five years by the parties of the majority—the social democrats had passed considerably beyond the two-million line. According to the returns now at hand it polled 2,120,000 votes.

The percentage by which the party votes of 1898 exceed those of the election of 1893 remains considerably behind the percentage of increase which the other elections have shown since 1884. This is especially apparent if the length of the interval between the two elections is taken into account. Something of the kind was to be expected after such an enormous increase of votes as was shown by the elections of 1890 and 1893. But that the increase of 340,000 votes at this election is to be rated as a new and great result is sufficiently and particularly evidenced—not to mention other things—in the reflections on the election indulged in by the opposition press. In a number of large industrial cities, in which the party had, even at an earlier date, possessed a large body of organized voters, as was the case also in Berlin, there has, of course, come an abnormal retardation of the increase of votes. Stagnation has also shown itself here and there as a result of inadequate representation; on the other hand, however, the results in other districts, and partly in the rural districts also, was so much the more surprising. The extension of the social democracy into the country districts is, however, what inspires the conservative parties with the liveliest apprehension, for the Prussian landed nobility constitutes the core of German conservatism. In the province of East Prussia, one of the strongholds of this squirearchy (*Junkertum*), the number of socialistic votes has risen from 12,400 in 1893 to 30,300 in 1898; so that it has more than doubled, without counting the number of votes obtained in the capital of the province, Königsberg, which has long been social-

istic. And similarly surprising were the results of the elections in the rural and mining districts of semi-feudal Upper Silesia; here, also, the party has, in individual districts, more than doubled its vote.

The press of all parties admits unanimously that the increase of the socialistic vote had once again been the salient characteristic of the election, which, in other respects left the relative proportion of the parties in parliament substantially as it had been. After the election, as before it, the Catholic party of the center has the largest number of members, and without their support the government can obtain no majority in the parliament. Of the 397 members of the parliament, the center counts 103 (5 more than in 1893); the two conservative parties have 74 (9 less than in the year 1893); the national liberals 50 (the same as in 1893). Of the remainder, 62 representatives belong to the small parties (Poles, Guelfs, Alsatians, Anti-Semites, Patrons of Husbandry, Bavarian *Bauernbund*, South German peoples' party); 11 are independent representatives, and 56 belong to the social democrats, which have thus scored an increase of 12 representatives, as compared with the election of 1893. Only one-seventh of the total number of representatives falls to this party, which is by far the largest of the parties, having secured as much as one-fifth to one-third of all the votes polled in the election of 1893, and having increased this again by some 19 per cent. in the election of 1898. With proportional representation the social democrats would have had more than 100 out of 397 members elected. Out of the 11.2 million persons entitled to vote in Germany, only 7.6 millions have voted at all. The 2,120,000 votes of the social democracy represent, therefore, 28 per cent. of all the votes; hence, under proportional representation, 28 per cent. of the 397 representatives would have been deputies of the socialist party. The center of gravity in parliament would consequently have been shifted from the center to the social democrats.

The existing wide discrepancy between its popular strength and its representation in parliament—and, consequently, its effec-

tive influence upon legislation—is in great part due to the fact that no redistribution of representatives has taken place since the foundation of the empire. Along with the rapid industrial development of Germany, the urban population, especially of the large cities, has increased out of all proportion to the rural population, and consequently the parliamentary representation of the urban population has constantly lost ground as compared with that of the rural districts. As early as 1890 those elective districts which consisted only of cities, contained, on an average, 41,100 voters; while the elective districts without large cities contained an average of 22,500 voters. Berlin, for instance, which elects only six deputies, should have been entitled to fourteen deputies as early as 1890, according to its number of inhabitants. Since the social democrats, in the nature of the case, draw their support chiefly from the proletariat of the cities, they, of course, primarily, suffer from this discrepancy in the representation of the cities. Still, even under these circumstances, the party could easily have raised the number of its delegates to at least seventy-five, if it had not been for the fact that the bourgeois parties combined against the social democrats in the by-elections, in more than 100 of which the party was interested. These parties opposed each other in the principal election, but now combined against their common enemy, and so showed how serious is their apprehension of the danger from socialism. The watchword of the election with which the social democrats this time entered the campaign was dictated to them by the actions of the government and of the agrarian conservative parties. The party was forced to take the defensive against fresh inroads from the camp of the reactionaries. For this reason, the special demands of labor were made entirely secondary to the general demands of democracy. The social democrats made their strongest fight in defense of the electoral franchise, which was threatened by the conservatives and national liberals. This piece of democracy which has entered the body politic, so to speak, by mistake, and, as it is the chief means of spreading the socialistic virus, it stands to reason that

these parties would gladly excise it at the earliest possible moment. But these attacks against the elective franchise have never been so open and ruthless as during the last parliament. And, above all, the example of the Saxon interference with the franchise has brought the danger home to the German people in a most tangible fashion. The reactionary majority in the Saxon chamber had, in the winter of 1896-7, simply canceled the previously existing system of an approximately universal and equal suffrage. Amid the plaudits of the conservatives throughout the empire, they introduced a plutocratic three-class system of elections similar to the Prussian. That the imperial government, also, as soon as the opponents of the suffrage in parliament shall have a majority for their plans, would willingly offer its assistance for far-reaching limitations of the suffrage, is very probable, considering their attitude in general. It is not likely that the apprehension of future conflicts or even the disintegration of the empire would hinder their making the most of such an opportunity to strike a blow at the hated social democracy.

But there was also another danger, still more threatening, to which the social democratic platform calls attention. The government is devising ways and means to still further abridge the right of combination, already hemmed in by all sorts of governmental and legal ordinances. A circular communication of the Secretary of the Interior, which the "Vorwärts" brought to the light, furnished the most conclusive proof of this. And this, in spite of the fact that the legal snares which have been put in the way of the exercise of the right of combination, are even at present so absurdly effective that a liberal professor of economics like Brentano could say that we have the right of political combination in Germany, but the exercise of it is a punishable offense. With great energy the platform then turns against the colonial and naval policy; the burdens incident to these having been again increased of late by the annexation of Kiao-Chao, and by large appropriations for an increase of the navy. These burdens go on increasing unremittingly, at the expense of a people already overloaded with the maintenance of the army. The platform

finally defines the position of the party in regard to the commercial treaties which will soon expire, and the renewal of which will be one of the principal tasks of the next parliament. Here also the reactionary alliance of the agrarian squires and the magnates of industry threatens to bring to naught what has already been achieved, as this alliance is bent on the most extreme of Bismarckian protectionism. There is nothing included in this platform which could have been omitted from the platform of any middle-class democratic party. The liberal party, as well as the center—so far as the maintenance of the suffrage is concerned—were committed to the same line of agitation. But the attitude of these parties in the by-elections has strengthened the reactionary forces in parliament; they have been declaiming against the "state of the future," instead of taking a part in the practical questions of politics. Nevertheless, a majority in favor of abridging the suffrage seems out of the question. For the present, at least, the general conditions for the development of the German social democracy will, therefore, it seems, remain unchanged; the government cannot afford to risk its scant popularity in an attempt to restrict the suffrage by a *coup d'état*. For the present it is impossible to foresee the outcome of the inward conflict of this development, in which the government has control of all material forces of the state, and in which, on the other side, the radical and oppositional social democracy more and more unites under its banners the great masses of the people.

At any rate so much appears clearly from the past history, that neither the government nor any of the middle-class parties will be able to tempt the socialistic workmen back into their camps. The government has twice taken a weak start to win back the workmen by the promise of social reform. Once under Bismarck, in the imperial message, and the laborers' insurance laws; and, again, in the present emperor's pronunciamiento of February 1890, followed by laws regulating the inspection of factories. Both attempts were equally futile. The little which resulted from this as a positive benefit for the workmen could, apart from all the rest, make no impression, for this reason, if

for no other, that the government was by no means inclined to grant the most urgent demands of the workmen, especially the demands for complete liberty in the exercise of the right of association and combination. Since then the wind has completely veered around in the upper regions and all efforts at social reform have been as good as lost sight of. Industrial feudalism, as represented by "King" Stumm, is the trump card. The plans for a further limitation of the right of combination, and the manner in which the government has prevented the intention of the parliament in regard to the law which prohibits combinations of political associations (a law principally utilized against the trades-union movement) are only a few of the many symptoms which characterize the ruling tendency. A final attempt at depriving the German social democracy of its democratic edge, and creating, in the sense of the existing monarchism and militarism, a "national" workingmen's party, has been made, in late years, by the "national" social party. While this group, conducted by a few, evidently very well-meaning preachers and professors, made its entry in a more liberal and modern spirit than the earlier Christian-Social movement with which it is related, it has yet had, if possible, still more insignificant results than its predecessor. The idea of the "social kingdom" which the national social party has tried once more to revive, had been given the lie too openly by the entire past development. The last elections showed the complete impotency of the new group, which, for all its efforts, nowhere got as much as even a secondary election.

And it appears just as little likely that one of the middle-class parties will be able to drive a wedge into the social democracy. What this party, which has been irresistibly growing, as an accompanying phenomenon, of the powerful capitalistic and industrial development of Germany, has in common with certain middle-class parties, consists essentially of its democratic claims. Only democratic middle-class parties could be at all considered as serious competitors of the socialistic workingmen's party. But the meaning which a socialistic workingmen's party puts

into democracy, namely, that democracy is to be sought as a means for the economic improvement of the masses, and, finally, as the means for the emancipation of the proletariat—this further purpose, which gives the democratic ideas so strong a hold upon the masses, of course, finds no place in these specifically middle-class democratic parties. Even the demands for the protection of workmen which such middle-class parties may make, either from intelligent insight or with a propagandist intention, must necessarily be narrowly limited, and they appear, therefore, entirely incapable of hindering the growth of social democracy wherever it has once gained a footing. But in Germany such an event is the more impossible as here a really and decisively middle-class democratic party does not exist at all.

The blind admiration of and subjection to Bismarck, and, on the other hand, the fear of an incipient socialistic movement, made the rise of such a middle-class movement in the German Empire impossible from the start. The further development has pushed liberalism more and more into the background, even in that attenuated form in which it was represented by the former progressist party, and has deprived it of all power, and all consistency of principle. The two divisions of the progressist party succeeded, in the principal election of June 16, in electing only two of its candidates by the party's own strength; the forty-one delegates by which the party of progress will be represented in the new parliament it owes only to the assistance, on the one hand, of the conservative parties which supported it as the "lesser evil" against the social democrats, and, on the other hand, to the social democrats who supported it as the "lesser evil" against the pronounced reactionists.

The nervelessness of this group cannot well be further increased, even where it has not been touched at all by the competition of the social democrats; as at the election for the Prussian House of Deputies, in which, on account of the plutocratic character of the Prussian elective system, the social democracy has hitherto not taken any part. Its failure is

evident. Out of 433 delegates to this parliament this party carried only twenty at the election of 1893.

Under these circumstances, the development has long ago brought about the result that the energetic advocacy of democratic aims which the middle classes renounced, has passed over to the social democracy. It stands at the head of every serious opposition to the feudal squirearchy, to absolutism, militarism, and to the rule of the police in Germany. Thus it necessarily shows, without prejudice to its proletarian socialistic aims, the tendency to develop into a universal people's party in Germany, which will be joined by all those liberal elements that are disgusted with the weakness and barrenness of middle-class liberalism. The room in which under different circumstances at an earlier time a middle-class democratic party might perhaps have developed in Germany is now completely taken up by the social democrats. Not only large masses of rural laborers, as the last elections have particularly and clearly shown, but also a large body of the lesser middle-class elements and considerable portions of the lower, poorly paid state officials, have joined the party; but its essential composition consists, of course, now as before, of the workingmen of the cities. And, what has been bitterly complained of in the great industrial centers, the feeling has also changed, at least partially, in the academically educated portions of the population; the earlier, fanatically narrow-minded hatred has here also to a slight extent given away to real sympathy, or at any rate to a more sober judgment and some degree of appreciation.

The rapidly growing party is looking in all directions for a field to utilize its forces. The trades unions which, in consequence of a variety of circumstances, above all on account of the legal limitations spoken of above, are far behind the strength of the political movement, are almost throughout saturated with the spirit of the party and make up one of its most powerful bulwarks. Socialistic representation has penetrated into a large number of communal bodies, wherever the communal franchise has permitted, and in like manner have the members of the

party taken a lively and efficient interest in the elections for the newly introduced courts of trade. Representatives of workingmen have also been elected in twelve of the twenty-three German local parliaments, though only in a scattering way; and, according to the resolution of the last convention of the party in Hamburg, the tactics hitherto adhered to of abstaining from these elections are now to be changed, even as regards the elections to the Prussian Diet. And this in spite of the fact that under the prevailing system of election the success of the socialistic candidate is not to be looked for. These Prussian elections are of the indirect kind: they take place by classes, the division being based on the amount of taxes paid. The plan is to put up electors¹ of our party in the third class of voters; these would then vote for those middle-class candidates from whom we may expect an emphatic opposition to the squirearchy, which has hitherto been all-powerful in the chamber. The occasion for this change of tactics which will have to stand the test in practical application in a few months from now, was furnished by the fact that a design for a new law, hostile to the existing law concerning the right of workingmen to join associations and attend meetings, was thrown out in the last chamber by a mere chance majority of a few votes, and that a strengthening of the liberal section which, as already mentioned, has declined to twenty members, is not to be looked for at the hands of the middle classes. The situation is quite characteristic of the complete incompetency of German liberalism where it is not supported by the mass of social democratic voters.

The social democrats meet in convention every year, since the abolition of the law against socialism, and with complete publicity. The final decision rests with the convention in all questions of practical party life; it elects a presiding committee and accepts the annual report of the same, as well as the annual report on the work of the parliamentary section, and the report of the treasurer. The record of the transactions of the party in

¹ Electors are the persons elected by the primary voters to vote at the principal election.—ED.

which these reports are incorporated thus furnish a continuous and extremely vivid picture of the inner as well as the outer party development during recent times. With what active interest the great mass of the members follow these transactions appears from the size of the editions of several sets of these records (some 10,000 copies each) which find a sale among the workingmen.

No other party in Germany comes near accomplishing anything like this, and no other party disposes of such large and flourishing funds as the social democrats, although the funds are drawn entirely from the petty contributions of the workingmen. In the last year, 1896-7, the report states, for instance, that the receipts of the central treasury alone amounted to 274,520 marks. Among these were 180,140 marks contributions of the party and 48,200 marks from the surplus receipts of the Berlin *Vorwärts*, the central organ of the party. The expenses of the central treasury were as follows in this year :

	Marks
Support of the party press, - - - - -	94,200
Support of the representatives to parliament, - - - - -	27,500
Agitation, - - - - -	85,500
Support in general, - - - - -	10,300
Salaries and administration, - - - - -	14,600
Expenses for law and imprisonment, - - - - -	5,352

The principal means of agitation is the press. The party already controls more than sixty-nine political sheets, among them some with an issue of from 40,000 to 50,000 copies (Berlin *Vorwärts*), and of 25,000 (Leipzig *Volkszeitung*); thirty-nine of these papers are dailies. To the sixty-nine political papers we may add fifty-three socialistic trades-union sheets; a scientific organ, *Die neue Zeit*; a couple of comic papers; and, as a paper for entertainment, *Die neue Welt*. Finally, in this connection the monthly publications issued for the spread of socialistic criticism in university circles may also be mentioned. These stand in a looser connection with the party. The pamphlets and the literature of books of the party, published principally by the publishing house of the *Vorwärts* and by the pri-

vate publications of Dietz, in Stuttgart, are likewise very numerous, and are issued in surprisingly large editions. An excellent and comprehensive picture of the whole past development of the party in Germany is offered in the now completed *History of the German Social Democracy*, by Dr. Franz Mehring; a part of a larger work, *The History of Socialism*, issued by installments, the publications of which was begun by Dietz some years ago.

In spite of all persecution and punishments—the last report of the party calculates that in the year 1896–7 alone 119 years of imprisonment and 28,200 marks in fines had been imposed for “misdemeanors” in the trades-union and political struggle—the movement thus offers in every respect a spectacle of vigorous and irresistible progress.

While the social democracy is, on the one hand, a party that tries to realize in the present condition of society the most urgent demands for the protection of the laboring class, and while, on the other hand, it has also written upon its banner the universal democratic demands, this is, after all, only the external features of the movement. What stamps this party more properly as a *social democratic* party, is its critical attitude toward *the entire capitalistic order of society*, and the contrast in which it stands to the latter. The demands which it raises in the practical struggle of the day, either in politics or in economics, will be correctly interpreted only if they are considered in their connection with this fundamental attitude of the party; only by the reference to a future aim lying beyond capitalism is the party distinguished in a fundamental manner from the middle-class reform parties. The condition of the German social democracy and its development is, therefore, to be apprehended in its essential character only by going back of its politics to the theoretical foundation of the party—to the manner in which it conceives its fundamental opposition to the capitalistic order of society.

The earliest form in which the socialistic body of thought became popular with larger masses of the workmen in Germany was formulated by Lassalle, in a loose connection with the

doctrines of Marx. From the very beginning the struggle of classes appears in his teaching as the decisive motive power of our modern social development; and the object of the development is the abolition of the wage relation—the doing away with the capitalistic monopoly in the means of production. What is peculiar to Lassalle is that he accepts and interprets in a revolutionary spirit one of the principal points of middle-class political economy. Some of the most zealous capitalistic petifoggers had striven to demonstrate the uselessness of any trades-union co-operation, and thereby to show the absolute subjection of the workmen to the will of capital. Lassalle accepts this contention and goes to work to impress upon the workingmen the great doctrine that they would be able to improve their condition as a class, only by doing away with the capitalistic wage relation.

Through the “iron law of wages,” according to which increased wages increase the population, and therefore the supply of labor, the laboring class must always be held down to a subsistence minimum, so long as they depend on the wages. Therefore, if the laborers would better their condition as a class, their endeavor must be to do away with that law of wages; that is to say, do away with the wage relation itself, on which this law is necessarily founded. This pitting of the middle-class political economy against capitalism was a stroke of genius. The course of argument in the scant writings and speeches, in which Lassalle elucidates this relation over and over again, was extremely clear and convincing, even to the least trained minds. Lassalle argued for the abolition of the wage relation on the following lines: Through a democratic system of suffrage the laborers should secure an effective influence in the state, which, according to Lassalle, stands above the contending parties as an impartial being; with the help of the credit of the state, they should found productive associations on a large scale, associations in which the capitalistic manager, and with him the wage relation, are dispensed with. The entire outcome of such enterprises would then naturally go to the association, and after

deducting the expenses of management, to the individual laborers associated in the enterprise. The Gotha program of 1875, on which the Lassalleans and the so-called Eisenach socialists led by Bebel and Liebknecht united, retains these catchwords of Lassalle's doctrine: the "brazen law of wages" and the "Productive Association," which were to lead over from capitalism to socialism. The treatment of the socialistic demands still continues in general to be ethical in this program. Labor is represented as the source of all wealth, of all civilization, and as, in general, useful labor is possible only through society, the entire product of labor belongs with an equal right to all members of society—to each one according to his rational needs.

It was not until the end of the seventies and after 1880, while the chains of the "exceptional law" weighed heavily upon the German workingman, that the specifically Marxistic thoughts sank more deeply into the parties. At that time appeared Engel's well-known publication, *Mr. Eugene Dühring's Revolution of Science*, which, more than any other, contributed to make the ideas of Marx popular. In the year 1883 the *Neue Zeit* was founded by Kautsky as its editor, and was conducted from the outset in a rigidly Marxistic sense. It was entirely in accordance with the changed conditions that the thoughts of Marx-Engels, although more difficult to apprehend, gradually crowded out the simple conceptions of Lassalle. The "iron law of wages" was a doctrine which, though particularly fitted to revolutionize large masses, yet lacked a sufficient basis in facts; and above all, this doctrine necessarily required a depreciation of the value of the direct endeavors and struggles of the working class. For all these struggles would have to be carried on upon the ground of this wage relation; the improvement of the condition of the workmen within this relation would have to be their aim, and they would have, therefore, to advance in a direction which, from the point of view of the "iron law of wages," could lead to nothing. Thus, for instance, as a consequence of this thought, the general assembly of the Universal German Workingmen's Union, in 1872 passed a resolution that it was the sense of the

assembly that, as soon as possible, all existing trades-union associations should be dissolved and their members brought together in political combinations. Another resolution declared that the general assembly was of the conviction that the unequal struggle, based solely on the *impossible self-help* of the workingmen, which was carried on by the co-operative associations against the power of capital, was endangering in the *highest degree* not only the resisting power of the workingmen, but also the radical social democratic endeavors of the Universal German Workingmen's Association. It was evident that no result could be in this direction. In a struggle of the labor party there cannot be any possible sense in proclaiming the trades-union struggle as futile from the start; in so doing it cuts one of its most important vital nerves. Marx himself has never taken any notice of Lassalle's "iron law of wages." He founded his socialistic doctrines upon the broad basis of his "materialistic conception of history." Political economy and, within its domain, the development of the technical arts, and the struggles of the interests of the economic classes, have thus far been, according to him, the motive power in the entire social development. The gradual growth of the productive forces over and beyond the existing order of production had demolished feudal and founded civic society. But also this latter, as well as all earlier formations of society, were carrying within themselves the germ of their destruction. As was apparent in the anarchistic phenomena of commercial crises, the bourgeoisie was no longer master of the existing productive forces; but in the proletariat, which had been, so to speak, organized by the bourgeoisie itself, as the result of co-operation in the manufactories and of accumulation in the large cities, this same bourgeoisie had produced its own grave-digger, which would some time expropriate the capitalistic expropriators who are concentrating the public capital and all means of production in ever fewer hands; and through resort to political power this movement will lead over from the capitalistic to a socialistic order of society.

The entering of the Marxistic spirit into the German social

democracy necessarily called forth an expression of this spirit in the party's program. In 1890, at the convention of Halle, the first meeting of the socialist party on German soil, after the abolition of the "exceptional law," the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Whereas the Gotha program, however excellent it has proven itself in the struggles of the last fifteen years, is no longer abreast of the times at all points, the presidency of the party is authorized and directed to propose a revised program for consideration at the next convention.

The Erfurt program, which came out of the party caucuses and debates amid the lively critical co-operation of the party press, in its theoretical part, not only disposed of the antiquated catchwords of the doctrine of Lassalle—the "iron law" and the demand of productive associations—but what is still more characteristic, it substituted for the universal and ethical features the historico-economical definition of socialism which Marx had sketched in the *Communist Manifesto* and in the section of his *Capital* which treats of the Historical Tendency of the Capitalist Accumulation.

The economic development of industrial society [says the Erfurt program] tends inevitably to the ruin of small industries, which are based upon the workman's private ownership of the means of production. It separates him from these means of production, and converts him into a destitute member of the proletariat, whilst a comparatively small number of capitalists and great landowners obtain a monopoly of the means of production.

Hand in hand with this growing monopoly goes the crushing out of existence of these scattered small industries by industries of colossal growth, the development of the tool into the machine, and a gigantic increase in the productions of human labor. But all the advantages of this revolution are monopolized by the capitalists and the great landowners. To the proletariat and to the rapidly sinking middle classes, the small tradesmen of the towns, and the peasant proprietors (*Bauern*), it brings an increasing uncertainty of existence, increasing misery, oppression, servitude, degradation, and exploitation (*Ausbeutung*).

Ever greater grows the mass of the proletariat, ever vaster the army of the unemployed, ever sharper the contrast between oppressors and oppressed, ever fiercer the war of classes between bourgeoisie and proletariat which divides modern society into two hostile camps and is the common characteristic of every industrial country. The gulf between the propertied classes

and the destitute is widened by the crises arising from capitalist production, which becomes daily more comprehensive and omnipotent, which makes universal uncertainty the normal condition of society, and which furnishes a proof that the forces of production have outgrown the existing social order, and that private ownership of the means of production has become incompatible with their full development and their proper application.

Nothing but the conversion of capitalist private ownership of the means of production—the earth and its fruits, mines and quarries, raw material, tools, machines, means of exchange—into social ownership, and the substitution of socialist production, carried on by and for society in place of the present production of commodities for exchange, can effect such a revolution that, instead of large industries and the steadily growing capacities of common production being, as hitherto, a source of misery and oppression to the classes whom they have despoiled, they may become a source of the highest well-being and of the most perfect and comprehensive harmony.

This social revolution involves the emancipation, not merely of the proletariat, but of the whole human race, which is suffering under existing conditions. But this emancipation can be achieved by the working class alone, because all other classes . . . have a common interest in maintaining the existing social order.

The struggle of the working classes against capitalist exploitation must of necessity be a political struggle. The working class can neither carry on their economic struggle nor develop their economic organization without political rights. They cannot effect the transfer of the means of production to the community without being first invested with political power.

In conjunction with the preceding there is a declaration of the international character of the proletarian endeavors and, as in the Gotha program, a foundation of the immediate political and industrial demands of the party. The political measures demanded are: A consistent democratization of the suffrage and the removal of all restrictions upon the press and on the right of association and meeting; universal military education, and the substitution of a militia for a standing army; the declaration that religion is a private matter, and therefore a demand for the separation of church and state; secularization of education with free tuition; free administration of law, free legal assistance, and free medical assistance; political and legal equality of women with men; and a progressive taxation of incomes and private property in place of the indirect taxes which burden the people.

As a special protection of the working class, there is demanded an efficient national and international code of laws for the protection of workmen, the principal object of which is the securing of a normal working-day of not more than eight hours, a uniform and effective inspection of factories, a guaranty of the right of combination and the extension of the right to farm laborers ; finally, the taking over by the imperial government of the whole system of workmen's insurance, though giving the workmen a certain share in its administration. The fundamental ideas of the program are that the aim of a socialistic workingmen's party must be the abolition of the monopoly of capital, and hence the establishment of social control of production and distribution ; further, that the conditions prerequisite to this end are, on the one hand, being worked out by the industrial development which tends to an ever-increasing concentration of capital, and on the other, by the politico-economic class struggle of the advancing proletariat. These ideas have entered into the flesh and blood of the German social democracy ; they are the "spiritual tie" which holds it together, just as firmly as the outward party discipline. But this common fundamental ground includes also—and this is a point of the greatest importance for the comprehension of the different currents of opinion within the party—it includes also the possibility of varying tendencies of thought, according to the degree of definiteness of the individual views held regarding the future development after capitalism shall have been superseded.

In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, and in a certain measure also in the Erfurt program, emphasis is laid upon the inner "contradictions" of the capitalistic system, by which the latter tends toward self-elimination and, ultimately, economic catastrophes. While, for instance, in mediæval society the serf had worked his way up to the condition of a member of the Commune in serfdom, the *Communist Manifesto* tells us that

The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly

than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery.

This incompetence of modern capitalist society is especially apparent in the phenomena of crises and unemployment. It seems, accordingly, that the increasing misery of the lowest class, in so far as it is a necessary accompaniment of capitalist evolution, is a revolutionary factor of the most far-reaching significance. The hopelessness of raising the condition of the laborer in any considerable degree within the capitalistic system is what first brings home to the workingman the necessity of doing away with the entire capitalistic system. Here the views of the *Communist Manifesto* meet the conclusions which Lassalle drew from the iron law of wages. The development beyond capitalism, therefore, can come about, as the *Communist Manifesto* says, only by a violent *rupture*. When the contradictions of the existing social system have passed the limit of tolerance, then the hour will strike when the proletariat will conquer the political sovereignty, and will recklessly exercise this sovereignty as a dictatorship.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.

This view is a prominent feature of the ingeniously designed Manifesto, that industrial catastrophes, political revolutions, and a proletarian dictatorship are the principal levers for a socialistic evolution of society. It has profoundly affected the tenets and actions of the party, though but rarely clearly formulated as a connected view. It is perceptible, also, in the Erfurt program, in so far as the latter speaks of the tendency of an advancing capitalism, constantly to increase the misery of the people. Of course, in so far as this very program formulates a series of far-reaching social reformatory demands for the pro-

tection of the workmen, the realization of which is held to be possible within the capitalistic wage system, it enunciates the thought lying at the foundation of all practical workingmen's politics : that trades-union organization and national legislation by the working class offer something of a defense against the depressing tendencies of capitalism. Without this supplementary statement, the conception presented in that manifesto, instead of inciting to an active war of classes in the present society, might easily lead to a fatalistic system of waiting for a general collapse and a spontaneous proletarian revolution—a result diametrically opposed to the notions actually held by Marx.

But it is also clear that, in so far as the fundamental view sketched in the Manifesto is adhered to, there must be present in the party an inclination to make use of the struggle in practical politics as a school for training the constituencies in points of theory and the inculcation of a revolutionary spirit. The struggle of trades unions and of politics, therefore, seem to be primarily a means of discipline and the development of class consciousness in the workingmen, so that they may at the beginning of the properly revolutionary epoch be possessed of the moral qualities which are necessary for a consistent exercise of the dictatorship. The question of protection to the workingmen may also be viewed from the same ground. The shortening of the working day should heighten the physical vigor of the workingmen and procure them leisure for their political education, both of which are necessary in order to put them in readiness for the decisive hour. If the practical fight of the day is hereby construed in a sense different from what it has to the body of those immediately concerned in it, that fact should also show itself in the tactics of the party and the discussions of these tactics. The more vividly this fundamental tenet is present the more prominent will the disposition become to apply the abstract standard of the "principle" to everything; to gauge every political action of the workingmen's party by it, to value every move by efficacy to do something toward the final goal,

the revolutionary preparation of the masses. It is, among other things, a feature of the work of men imbued with this view to insist that in every phase of the movement its specifically proletarian character shall appear as distinctly as possible. The tendency, founded in the German conditions, of social democracy to expand into a party of the *small people*, *i. e.*, of the lower classes as a whole, and thus go beyond the proletariat of the factories and grow into a democratic people's party having its support in the broadest strata of society—when viewed from this standpoint, it may readily appear to be a departure from the party's proper aim, a turning aside from the necessary final goal. And in the same way, if looked at from this point of view, the parliamentary activity of the deputies of the workingmen may easily appear in a questionable light. The parliamentary tactics of limiting one's self to what, under the circumstances, is attainable, has, when measured by the final goal of a revolutionary uprising, an appearance of pettiness, a dissipation of the revolutionary energy. In this view, then, both the campaign before an election and parliamentary tactics of the deputies elected should have essentially a demonstrative character only, aiming to stir up the masses; the legislative activity proper would have to fall into the background as a matter of secondary consequence.

This train of thought, which rarely appears in such a full and explicit form, is traceable to another conception which likewise runs back to Marx and Engels. The idea of a violently abrupt "transformation of the structure of society" taking effect "by way of a despotic interference from above" is not in harmony with the fundamental outlines of the materialistic conception of history of Marx-Engels. A revolution may, of course, be the "midwife" of a new order of society, but the condition for its having such an effect is, according to the materialistic conception, that the economic and other social conditions must be ripe for such a transformation. Only in so far as this is the case will revolutions result in permanent social success. In other words, the political power achieved by the revolutionary strata of society may develop and advance the already existing tendencies in society

and politics, but cannot at a stroke create something entirely new and not in consonance with the existing tendencies. And in an extreme degree must this proposition apply to a movement which cannot attain its end by a change of the existing legislation (as middle-class revolutions have sought to do), but which aims at a more radical change involving the extension of the administration of the state to the extremely delicate organization of economic life. The abolition of privileges is a question of political power, and such a change can take place only by a sudden effort and by a dictatorial unfolding of power, as is shown by the example of the great French Revolution; but in the expropriation of the capitalists the abolition of the privileges of private capital means at the same time the assumption of profoundly important economic functions by the state or other public bodies—the development of new and exceedingly complicated branches of administration and organization, which can only grow gradually. The application of political power would, in this case more than in any other period of history, have to be limited narrowly with a view to the given industrial conditions, otherwise there would be danger that rash and violent experiments would plunge the industrial mechanism into the gravest crises, thereby damaging the proletariat itself, and conjuring up counter revolutionary movements.

These considerations, taken together with the course of events during the decade from 1850 to 1860, after the publication of the Manifesto, has led to a view which on essential points traverses the one sketched above. The development of capitalist industry, as well as the course taken by the trades-union and political contest in which the lower classes were concerned during those years did not bear out the theory. Engels himself, in 1895 (in his admirable preface to the new edition of Marx's *Klassen-Kämpfe in Frankreich*), has admitted that the preconception which influenced him as well as Marx at the time of the Revolution of 1848, and which therefore also influenced the tone of the *Communist Manifesto*, had been proven erroneous by the further progress of history. The victorious advance and the immense expansion

of capitalism in the following fifty years has shown clearly "how impossible it was in 1848 to achieve a social transformation by a simple *coup de main*." This is true not only for that time but equally so today. "The time of *coups de main*," the time of revolutions carried through by small minorities over the heads of the unconscious masses, is gone. In any effort which aims at a complete transformation of the social structure, "the masses themselves must comprehend what is the object for which they are to fight;" and this very work of enlightenment of the masses will thrive best on the soil of peaceful evolution, in which the mighty army of the proletarians can gain no victory at a single blow, but must advance slowly step by step. However free from doubt, and however well founded, therefore, the "right of revolution" may be, the chances for such a revolution are very slight, both from the intrinsic nature of the case and on account of the obstacle offered by the modern army system, Engels does not go on to say expressly, but it is plainly implied in his discussions that a victorious revolution would only establish a new democratic basis upon which the peaceful evolution, substantially determined by the grouping of parliamentary majorities, would have to proceed. We may surely presume that this conception, which assigns to revolutions only a secondary part, inside the course of further development, and which does not believe in the miraculous effects of a "dictatorship dealing with despotic measures," forced itself in later years not only upon Engels, but also upon Marx. If no other evidence were available the extraordinary significance which he assigned to certain acts of the English factory legislation would favor this view. So soon, however, as the principal stress was laid upon the peaceful and lawful evolution, instead of on revolutionary action, so soon the idea that this evolution will be sharply set off by a hard and fast line of demarcation will also fall to the ground. The idea that capitalism must go on indefinitely accentuating its contradictions, that it must permanently worsen the condition of the people, and thus reduce itself to absurdity; all this loses the theoretical cogency through which it once gave support to the revolutionary ideal. But

when capitalism is conceived as substantially an irresistible mechanism, the destructive power of which can be stayed neither by a trades-union movement pressing upon it from below, nor by a social reform interfering from above; with such a conception as its central feature, it becomes well-nigh unavoidable for any view that looks to a gradual peaceful evolution to lay some emphasis on the possibility of bettering the condition of the working classes through meliorative efforts within the capitalistic system.

As a matter of fact, during the fifty years since the Manifesto, capitalism has shown a surprising capacity of adaptation; the "contradictions" which become evident in overproduction and in commercial crises have been smoothed out by the play of demand and supply; the productive forces of industry have gone on increasing in efficiency at an unprecedented rate. And as this development has not hitherto shown any premonitory signs which point to a near economic collapse or to an advancing decadence of capitalism; so has it also not resulted in a progressive increase of proletarian misery. It is not denied that some important classes of workmen, benefited by the trades-union and political struggle, have appreciably improved their condition. And however distressing may be the conditions of life under which the great mass of people still live today, it cannot be proven that the pressure has increased in proportion to the advance of capitalistic development. These are phenomena which the middle-class economists have continually brought up against the socialist contentions. But it is clear that a view which does not look to the socialization of industry through revolutionary surprises and inroads, but rather through a gradual, progressive, and essentially peaceful evolution, is by no means to be refuted by an appeal to these facts. The partial, though wholly inadequate improvement of the condition of the working class within the capitalistic system appears in this light, not as a hindrance, but rather as a lever of evolution urging to something beyond capitalism. For every advance which the workingman has achieved bears in itself the incentive to new struggles, to the

conquest of new positions. And this continuous forward movement, if continued, is precisely what cannot but transform the character of capitalistic production from within, and jointly with the accumulation of capital it must produce the economic conditions necessary to the adequate working out of a higher form of society lying in the direction of the socialistic ideal.

The trades-union struggle and the political and social reforms achieved must not be judged by the insignificant beginnings already at hand, but by the possibility of a continuous onward movement inherent in them. From this point of view they appear in an entirely different light from that in which the revolutionary idealist sees them. The old-fashioned revolutionary socialist saw in them only a defense by which the workmen could protect their physical existence from the worst blows of capitalistic exploitation, at the same time that they gained in discipline for the great decisive battle of the future. But if the idea that this decisive battle will take the form of a violent revolutionary catastrophe is dropped, then the economic and political advance of the proletariat within capitalism also gains a new meaning. It loses, so to speak, its purely theoretical and educational character, and acquires a direct bearing upon the final goal which, according to the view of socialists, the social movement is rapidly tending. This goal—the management of production and distribution by society itself—is diametrically opposed to the present system, in so far as the management of production under this system meets with no other check than the pleasure of the capitalists, regulated only by competition. A development from the existing condition to its opposite is possible only through a gradual restriction of the range of private discretion in business affairs and a gradual extension of social control over industrial processes. In this way alone can the working classes achieve the conquest of the industrial domain; and in this way only can social control of industry be developed to such a degree of efficiency as to make a comprehensive socialist system workable. But is not this effort for limitation of the power of capital and the extension of the social

control already substantially begun in the work of trades unions and of the political parties with a working class constituency? Will not this line of endeavor, coupled with the progressive accumulation of capital at the hands of business men, of itself work out the socialistic consummation? The substantial aim of the trades-union movement is the transformation of the despotically governed factory into a constitutionally governed factory. The trades unions aim to control the conditions under which capitalists shall carry on their business; that is to say, the workmen as a corporate body are to take over the regulation of industry in its general features. Every industrial reform means an invasion of the domain of capitalistic freedom, in that society undertakes an authoritative regulation of the conditions of labor. These efforts, as well as the efforts of the co-operative stores, seem very modest and tentative advances only, but their trend is unmistakably toward a comprehensive social control of the industrial situation. Their immediate object is to set limits to the scope of capitalistic exploitation; but since the profits of business, which constitute the incentive as well as the source of growth in capitalistic industry, rest on exploitation—on the appropriation of surplus labor—it is clear that every limitation of this kind, when developed up to a certain degree, strikes at the root of the capitalistic structure. The capitalist, hampered on all sides in his exercise of the right of ownership over proletarian labor, may in this way be degraded from the position of owner to that of a factor, an agent who, under circumstances easily conceivable, would gladly surrender his function to the community, since it ceases to be remunerative. In a democratic commonwealth, with the proletarian interests in the ascendant, this process of adaptation and substitution can be regulated at pleasure, to suit the degree of industrial maturity attained by the community at the time. There need be no despotic encroachments and no dangerous shock to the industrial mechanism.

While, therefore, the revolutionary conception sees in the past economic and political tactics of the workmen's movement only something in the nature of a preliminary move—something

that will have to give place to tactics of a different order as soon as the real struggle is upon us—the later, evolutionary conception looks upon these tactics and efforts as legitimate adequate work, going, in its degree, to further the sub-ends of the movement and bring us nearer to the ultimate collectivist system of socialism. Any socialist imbued with this evolutionary conception, therefore, will attach a relatively high value to these tendencies of practical labor politics, as well as to the slight results already achieved along this line; whereas those who adhere to the revolutionary conception of the socialists of the ancient line will be inclined to see in all this not much better than a confusion of ideas and a danger of stagnating the movement. A similar divergence of views occurs also on another, related point. The social democratic party tends to become a people's party comprising large elements from other social strata than the industrial proletariat. This development may easily be viewed by the revolutionary socialist as a deplorable symptom of the decadence of party spirit and of class consciousness in the proletarian-socialistic body.

This much attention has been given to these two divergent lines of socialistic thought, because the theoretical question has an immediate bearing upon the practical questions that have divided the party. Precisely this range of questions promises to give its character to the growth and activity of the party in the near future. The next step in advance must apparently be to clear up the party's position on these matters.

It is precisely because this clearness has hitherto been wanting, that whenever there has been a conflict of views, the difference has appeared to run on incidental questions rather than on questions of fundamental principle. What has been characterized as two divergent lines of thought has not been so conceived by those engaged in the party's work. The whole range of ideas has been adhered to in a vague way, without sharp lines of demarcation and without an adequate sense of the discrepancies involved.

The dominant fact that has shaped the party's views

been the brilliant practical success which it has scored by its recourse to the ballot and through the effect of its representation in parliament. The ideas of the *Communist Manifesto*, which were formulated under widely different circumstances, have not been given up, but have rather been forcibly adapted to the situation of today. In this blending of modern fact and ancient theory, now one and now the other element has been chiefly in evidence. The talk has run now on how capitalism is to "ripen" into socialism, now the approaching grand hodgepodge into which the existing social order is to fall on its collapse. And in all this there has been little, if any, sense of the incongruity involved, and no effort to clear it up.

These divergent views on the head of socialistic development have had a great part in the serious differences and disputes that have arisen in the party's conventions. It may even be said that this has been the substantial ground of debate. This comes out especially in the Erfurt convention, where a new platform was adopted. The deliberations at this convention went against the proposals of the radical "opposition" as well as against the opportunist program of Volmar. This "opposition" party dates back, in Berlin at least, to the times of the exceptional law, and its fight has been carried on with some undignified pettiness. But, for all that, it is an extremely interesting development, in that it was in this opposition that the *de facto* contradiction between the party's practice and its preaching first found recognition. The party still officially proclaimed its adherence to the ancient revolutionary ideal, but its practical work was quite out of touch with the revolutionary conception. The opposition now demanded that the revolutionary ideal should be taken seriously — that it should be adopted as a standard by which to gauge the advance of the party and control its tactics. Under the guidance of this revolutionary conception the spokesmen of the opposition voiced their distrust of the parliamentary tactics adopted by the party, as well as of the legitimacy of taking in other than purely proletarian elements into the party fold; and they did not hesitate to carry their

insistency on these points to a degree of absurdity. The convention chastised the opposition for its ill-natured attacks, after which the adherents of the opposition formed an organization of their own under the name of "Independents." But no sooner had this been effected than the absolute impotency of the entire departure became evident. So long as the adherents of the revolutionary ideal remained within the party and endeavored to reconcile their conception of the party's work with the actual course of events, their views had exercised an appreciable controlling influence; but so soon as they withdrew and fell into recognized antagonism with the party's work, the ground fell away from under them. The dissentient organization shriveled into a mere sect of dogmatists, and lost all bearing on the actual course of events. The organ of the movement, *Der Socialist*, as well as the greater portion of the sectaries, conscious of their own impotence, went over into the camp of utopistic anarchism. The most serious diversion that has thus far been made in the name of the purely revolutionary socialism has run itself into the ground.

The Erfurt convention having renounced the Berlin opposition, a further division showed itself in the party's counsels. The debate between Vollmar and Bebel brought out a division of sentiment in the party on lines similar to those which had divided the party as a whole from the opposition. It is unnecessary here to go into the details of Vollmar's position, but the leader of the Bavarian social democracy had on more than one occasion committed himself to views that were in line with the evolutionary conception of socialist development. But along with this he had also shown a quite ungrounded trust in the government. Bebel severely criticised Vollmar's utterances, taking his stand upon the revolutionary ideal. In these strictures of Bebel's, and in Vollmar's replies to him, the two opposing tendencies of socialistic thought came out in a clear light, although they still wanted definitive formulation. The convention adopted a compromise resolution, to the effect that Vollmar had declared himself in favor of continuing the present

policy of the party; and the convention then went on to the order of the day. In point of fact, the working policy of the party in the political contests of the day is enforced upon the party by the exigencies of the contest, and is but slightly affected by differences of opinion as to the nature of social development. The convention, by emphasizing this point of view, acted throughout in the true interests of the party, which go hand in hand with the interests of a free critical development of thought within party lines. The new program, which the Erfurt convention unanimously adopted, proved how greatly the consciousness of community in point of fundamental views preponderated over the differences that might be present in detail.

All the hopes of the party's enemies for a split in the party ranks had once more come to naught. At the next (Berlin) convention a resolution was presented, jointly signed by the two adversaries, Liebknecht and Vollmar, which condemned the so-called "state socialism," in the strongest terms, in so far as it aims at socialization for the fiscal purposes of the state alone, and which designated certain measures of the government favoring the workingman as "small installments" which "can in no wise divert the party from its endeavors in the direction of a socialistic reorganization of the state and of society."

Certain reverberations of the Erfurt debate were still perceptible at this Berlin convention, as well as in a contemporary newspaper war carried on between Vollmar and the *Vorwärts*; but since the convention the controversy has ceased. But the discussions which had in this way come to light presently found further material, when a plan for carrying the agitation into the agricultural districts was taken under advisement. The occasion for this was a resolution introduced in the Frankfort convention. As early as 1890, at the meeting in Halle, the party had announced its intention of carrying the agitation from the industrial centers into the rural districts, and thus of assailing the strongest, and as yet the undisputed, breastwork of the existing social order. The Frankfort resolution demanded that for this purpose a particular agrarian political program be drawn up, in which the party

should formulate its demands with regard to the protection of peasants and farm laborers. Three committees, one each for north, middle, and south Germany, were appointed to study the question and to report at the next convention.

This stirred up a lively discussion in the party papers, and the discussion is of peculiar interest because it threw fresh light upon the curious fact that, as contrasted with other lines of industry, the small industry still tenaciously survives in agriculture. This is in apparent contradiction of the Marxian doctrines of the socialists, that capital everywhere tends to become concentrated in larger and larger bodies. The program submitted in outline by the committees was rejected by a majority at the Breslau convention in 1895. A counter resolution, drawn up by Kautsky and accepted by 158 against 63 votes, gave the following reasons for rejecting it: The resolutions presented (looking to the establishment of state mortgage banks, etc.) were calculated to preserve and extend agricultural private property, thereby working in the interest of the ruling classes but not furthering the interests of the proletariat; and, further, such measures would augment the power of the existing state, to the detriment of the proletariat. The grouping of the divergent factions was somewhat different from what it had been at the Erfurt convention. Bebel, for instance, was among the advocates of the agrarian program. But in this case, as on the earlier occasion, while other factors had their effect, the struggle lay substantially between the revolutionary and the evolutionary ideals. But apart from the question as to what considerations may have decided the convention's action, the result of the last elections to the parliament in the Upper Silesian and east Prussian *eldorado* of the squirearchy has given palpable evidence that the farm laborer—whose support is of the gravest importance to the party—is accessible to the propaganda without resort to any peculiar agrarian program. And as regards the population of small farmers, it may well be doubted whether the somewhat commonplace proposals of the agrarian program would exert much of an attraction upon the peasants, or would seriously

come into competition with the promises held out by the middle-class parties. In the meantime it is to be expected that this question, the discussion of which has been broken off but not ended, will come up again at later conventions of the party.

As at the convention of Breslau, so also at that of Hamburg in 1897, these two fundamental tendencies of socialistic thought came in conflict, though in a less extreme form. As has already been mentioned, the convention finally recommended participation in the election for the Prussian Diet, the party throwing its weight on the side of middle-class liberal candidates. This resolution was combated by the opposition, not only on practical grounds, but also as a matter of principle; it was held to indicate a departure from the party's proletarian standpoint.

Since these discussions did not deal with the question of social development as a socialistic trend, they could contribute but little to a clarification of the party's views on this head. The first attempt to handle this question in a serious manner is that now made by Bernstein, editor of the radical revolutionary *Sozialdemokrat*, under the exception law. For more than a year past he has from time to time published articles in the *Neue Zeit*, under the title, "Problems of Socialism," the aim of which is in a sober and impartial spirit to explain the discrepancies and crudities of the traditional conception. These articles are written entirely from the standpoint which has here, for brevity's sake, been called the evolutionary conception. These discussions of Bernstein's have attracted a wide and increasing attention in party circles throughout Germany, and have called forth assent, criticism, or remonstrance. A more systematic discussion of this question of theory may well be expected to engage the chief interest of the party for some time to come, and the outcome of such a discussion can scarcely fail to be a more adequate appreciation by the party of its own aims and tendencies.

There need be no doubt that this process of clarification will be carried out without any danger to the integrity of the party. Indeed, it may confidently be expected that the result for the party will be a very substantial furtherance of its theoretical

coherence and stability, a more unassailable position as against its enemies, and consequently a notable unfolding of strength also in the practical domain. With the growth of the party and the further unfolding of its political influence, the need of a clear and unwavering apprehension of its theoretical basis grows even more urgent.

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